BROADCASTERS VICTORY COUNCIL

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THE WAY IS OURS TO FIND **

Broadcasters heard their part in the national framework of total war sketched with deft, plain words this week at the opening day of the NAB Convention in Cleveland. It was good to hear in those words - from OFF's head man, Archibald MacLeish - a clear exposition of what our government hopes the radio industry can do. It was good to know that this assignment has been handed us as an assignment - in a spirit of confidence and without the scowls of compulsion.

Basically, what Archibald MacLeish told the convening broadcasters is a confirmation of what the BVC has been stressing in its determined way these many weeks. Washington has given to radio a job that no one ever attempted before. It is not going to tell radio how the job should be accomplished. Into our complex mechanism for mass communication goes the need; out of it must come the result. What lies between is the skill, courage, experience and resourcefulness of men who are wise in the ways of our industry.

Their best tool - and the one that Washington asks them to use with consummate zeal - is an intangible called initiative. It must be tempered by the twin virtues of commonsense and good taste. It must be put to work in a hard-hitting race against time and apathy and our enemies from without and our enemies from within. It must tell the American people what they should know, what they should do. The quicker they understand, the quicker they act - then the quicker this war will be won and relegated to an ugly catastrophe that our children can read about in their history books.

The word "must" - sprinkled through the previous paragraph - is self-imposed. That's one of the reassuring, important points of the MacLeish address - and one that heightens even higher the obligations which broadcasting must accept for itself in the empyrean task of moulding and riveting together the thinking of America.

In the Nazi universe a private industry like broadcasting would not be asked to perform such self-evident, patriotic tasks - because, you see, in a Nazi universe broadcasting would not be a private industry. In America we have come to look upon radio as a powerful instrument of democracy. Radio has the confidence and attentive ears of our people. Now, we find, it has the faith of our government.

The needs are evident. Washington outlines them freely and is eager to co-operate. Radio must keep its tools sharp - its initiative working at full speed. The results can be the hard difference between victory and defeat.

GIVE IT YOUR BEST **

America's enemies from within are not all concrete, melodramatic things like agents who rip up railway tracks and saboteurs who put emery dust in crankcases. We have, for example, enemies of our own unconscious creation - like this spiraling, dangerous business of inflation. Next Monday (May 18), as you well know, a vigorous offensive to puncture further inflation begins to roll with adoption of retail price control on most basic articles by the Office of Price Administration.

It's a tremendous step, of course, and one that can well be puzzling to the public. Radio has been presented with the robust responsibility of putting over a quick, intensive campaign to explain for the average citizen just why price-fixing is imperative, and what he must do to co-operate.

Fundamental data for spot announcements and educational broadcasts has already been sent all stations by the Office of Emergency Management. We want to stress loudly for you that the OFF has instantly given this drive a conclusive double-A rating. Since naturally you won't find it listed on the last Radio War Guide, if you need further information and advice, local and regional OEM offices are at your service.

Because of the brief time remaining, we suggest you climb on your bicycle at once and concentrate upon a bang-up job to make price control and its reasons less of a mystery to the people of America.

PLANS FOR A POOL **

There is a certain bright hope these days for broadcasters - all of whom may eventually expect to find the cupboard bare of reserve tubes and other transmitter vitals - in a recommendation made last week by the Domestic Broadcast Committee of the DCB.

The proposal calls for establishment of a pool, purely as a paper inventory, providing the WPB grants a sufficiently high priority rating for the replenishment of depleted items.

Under the arrangement (which still needs approval from both the DCB and the WPB), the paper pool would be supervised by a station-elected administrator and two assistants in each of the 17 NAB districts. If it's been your custom to keep a 100% or greater reserve stock of tubes and parts on the shelf, you'll be permitted to continue having 100% handy. Under the priority arrangement, however, you'd be able to draw on the pool after your own reserves are exhausted in return for making your other excess items available at this time to less well-stocked stations.

At first glance, it may seem like a large order were being asked of the foresighted so as to help those who haven't planned ahead. Don't overlook, though, that it may be a long, dreary war. We need the teamed-up efforts of every broadcaster in the land - and there's no broadcaster in the land who can smugly sit back and think he won't in time feel the strangling pinch of replacements that can't be made.

WAR STAMPS AND SODAS **

Patriotism pops up in all kinds of places, and the war effort can stand all the patriotism it gets. The more groups who go out and push War Bonds and exhort the people to buy War Stamps, the faster we'll break the Axis.

There is, however, such a thing as getting your patriotism mixed up with other, more earthy matters. We're thinking at the moment of a drive by a national drug trade association to have the public buy War Stamps at drug stores. That's fine. If campaigns like this can boost the sale of War Stamps, we're all for having them sold by butcher shops, beauty parlors and hot dog stands.

The point in question is that the drug trade association has been approaching broadcast stations with a plea for announcements asking the good citizenry to go buy War Stamps at local drug stores. Now this, to our way of thinking, does not smack of total altruism. It seems to help the druggists as much as it does the Treasury Department - on the theory that after Mr. Jasper Public has bought his War Stamp, he's likely to remember he also needs a new toothbrush, an electric toaster or a three-decker club sandwich.

Not only has the drug trade group asked for such announcements, but it's also requested that individual stations report back on how many plugs were aired. This doesn't seem like a good, clean-cut game of cricket.

Radio's job is naturally to give the sale of War Bonds and Stamps every aid. But these items are on sale at many places, and radio's direct obligation is to the Treasury. Of course if you want to plug the drug angle for any local reason, that's up to you. There's no reason why you shouldn't if you see fit. Looking at the matter nationally, however, we point out that broadcasting is performing a general job on behalf of the United States Treasury and is not obligated to play ball with any hitch-hikers who may come along.

THE SAVING SPIRIT **

Intelligent frugality is the keynote of a single folded sheet of newsprint paper titled "WOR's War on Waste" and issued recently by the station of the same call-letters. Designed as an intramural project to give WOR employees a number of timely hints on wartime conservation, the folder lists some 31 different ways to eliminate office waste.

A copy might give you some smart notions on a conservation campaign of your own. WOR, 1440 Broadway, New York City, will be glad, we understand, to send you one upon request.

WAR BONDS AS PRIZES **

Further clarification of how the Treasury Department feels about the bandying of War Bonds as prizes or rewards, premiums or what-you-will in lotteries, games of chance and the like is revealed in a carefully-worded statement on the subject issued last week at Washington.

Confusion has arisen now and again as to whether it's within the ethical pall to give away War Bonds and Stamps on radio quizzes, slogan

contests and shows of similar format. The Treasury has no objection.

It's all a matter of whether chance or skill is involved. Obviously radio can't hold lotteries or broadcast programs where the contestant has to buy merchandise before he's allowed to participate. The official statement covers the subject thusly:

"The Department disapproves of the use of savings bonds or savings stamps as prizes or rewards, either alone or in combination with merchandise, through lotteries, punch boards, pin ball games, or other games of chance where an element of personal profit is involved either directly or indirectly. Objection is not made to such use in contests of knowledge or skill, not depending upon chance, such as quizzes, slogan contests or the like, not directly connected with retail sales of merchandise.

"The Treasury also strongly disapproves of the use of either bonds or stamps as premiums, discounts or gifts in connection with the retail sale of merchandise, particularly as premiums for coupons or other stamps or counters in the nature of trading stamps or the like, or the use of bonds or stamps in any way calculated to give one merchant or dealer any advantage, real or apparent, over his competitors.

"These objections are based on considerations of public policy and do not depend upon the legality or illegality of any of the devices or games mentioned under the laws of the United States or of any state, nor upon whether or not practices to which the Department objects may be considered violations of fair trade practices."

THE VOICES FROM AUSTRALIA **

In the past two weeks we've reported on the original plan of the Red Cross to transcribe voices of American fighting men in Australia, and how this was changed because Mutual is carrying a quite similar series of shows by arrangement with the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

The BVC now learns that Mutual is willing to make these programs available to any stations in areas not served by a Mutual outlet - providing, of course, they shoulder the wire costs. Request should be made direct to Mutual New York office.

Recordings of individual voices, suitable for home phonographs, will still be sent by the Red Cross to parents and relatives of men involved. Meanwhile the Australian Broadcasting Commission is announcing that the rebroadcast shows are aired in this country through the joint co-operation of Mutual and the American Red Cross.

FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE FIELD **

We hear from Lee Falk of the OFF's Foreign Language Division that Morris S. Novik, Director of WNYC in New York City, has been appointed as another member of the special committee of the Foreign Language Advisory Council. Although WNYC is definitely a one-language station, the new

committeeman has had wide and valuable experience in this field of broadcasting.

BE KIND TO YOUR CAR CAMPAIGN **

Commendably institutional is a new two-minute ET being offered to the radio industry at large by The Texas Company which, they tell us, sells oil and gasoline and things like that. It's a musical selection with a male quartet and Al Goodman's orchestra thrumming along on the theme of caring for your car and automotive conservation in general, from tires to gas tank. It contains no advertising blurbs.

The selection was played last Sunday night during the Fred Allen show, and plugs the slogan adopted by the entire oil industry on behalf of conservation - "Care for Your Car...for Your Country."

A copy of the transcription may be had for a song - i. e., without charge - by writing to the Advertising Division of The Texas Company, 135 East 42nd Street, New York City. Sounds like a good bet.

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